

April 6, 1973

Mrs. Lynn Murphey
2951 East Bradford Drive
Birmingham, Michigan 48010

Dear Mrs. Murphey:

I will try to answer the questions in your letter of March 23rd.

Many babies have a bluish face after delivery, especially if the labor has been prolonged or if the umbilical cord is wound around the neck. Almost all of these babies turn out well and do not have brain injury. Also, the skull of many babies is misshapen by the forces pressing on the bones during labor. It also takes several days for the skull to return to its usual shape. Thank goodness, the bones are movable enough to overlap when necessary or there would be many more fractured skulls. However, these two observations suggest that you had a somewhat difficult delivery. One wonders how active the baby was right after birth. Did she cry promptly, feed well and grow at the usual rate?

If the mother is quite young there should be no problems with eight years between children. However, if she had a baby at 35 years of age and the next at 43, her age alone is associated with a small rise in the incidence of birth defects.

There are so many allergies in this world that if only non-allergic people married, there would be very few families! The seriousness of the allergic response should be considered, such as severe asthma in both parents. The underlying causes of allergies have not yet been discovered. They may or may not be an abnormal chemical reaction and, if so, inheritance may well play a role. But this is not yet known for certain.

Thank you for writing me.

Sincerely yours,

VA:bm

Virginia Apgar, M.D., M.P.H.

bcc: VL